

Godwin Mill:  
Boiler and Engine House  
(Hamil Mill)  
Mill and Market Streets  
Paterson, New Jersey  
Passaic County

HAER No. NJ-14

HAER  
NJ,  
16-PAT,  
13-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HAER  
NJ,  
16-PAT,  
13-

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

GODWIN MILL:  
BOILER AND ENGINE HOUSE  
(HAMIL MILL)

DATE: 1857-1858

LOCATION: Mill and Market Streets  
Paterson, New Jersey

DESIGNED BY: John Spear

OWNER: No longer extant; demolished 1983

SIGNIFICANCE: First leased in 1822, the Godwin Mill Lot housed one of the first large cotton spinning operations in Paterson. The Mill remained in operation until 1848, when it was destroyed by fire. Nine years later, Abraham Godwin and John T. Spear constructed a new building on the ruins of the old mill. The Mill was acquired by Robert Hamil and James Booth in 1872. In the early twentieth century, the lot changed hands several times, reverting to the SUM in 1932.

TRANSMITTED BY: Monica E. Hawley, Historian, 1983

Hamil Mill Lot (Godwin Mill)

The following is the result of a deed search done at the time of the survey:

"All that certain lot of land situated in Paterson, in the County of Passaic and State of New Jersey, at the corner of Mill and Congress Streets adjoining mill lot number 2, formerly possessed by Robert Collett. Beginning on the rear of said Mill lot at a stone monument placed on the northeast corner of mill lot number 2, and running from thence Easterly one hundred feet parallel to the South boundary line of Henry Morris Mill Lot (Hamilton Mill Lot) and at the distance of forty-one feet from it; thence Southerly at right angles and in a parallel line with Mill Street one hundred and ninety feet; thence Westerly at right angles and parallel to Congress Street one hundred feet to the Southeast corner of the aforesaid Mill lot number 2; thence Northerly along the line of said lot one hundred ninety feet to the place of beginning."<sup>1</sup>

The first lease issued by the SUM for the Hamil Mill Lot was to Alexander Carrick and Robert Dunlop in April of 1822. Included in the agreement was the grantee's right to 288 square inches of water from the Society's lower canal.<sup>2</sup> The following year the partners erected a cotton mill on the site to house the fledgling firm of Robert Dunlop and Co. By 1825, the firm was employing 120 hands, operating 2100 spindles and 60 power looms, processing 2100 lbs. of cotton into 6500 yards of cloth weekly.<sup>3</sup> The partnership became tripartite in that same year with the entrance of Alexander Carrick's brother, Robert, into the firm. For 20,000 dollars, Robert Carrick was granted "the one equal undivided third part" of the concerns holdings.<sup>4</sup> Two days later, Dunlop resigned from the business, selling his one-third interest to the Carricks for \$20,000.<sup>5</sup>

The cotton factory of A. & R. Carrick was worth \$90,000 in 1827. Equipped with 3,000 spindles and 60 power looms, the factory produced 135,000 lbs. of yarn and 315,000 yards of cloth annually from 150,000 lbs. of raw cotton. It employed 15 men, 50 women, and 60 boys and girls.<sup>6</sup> Two years later, the factory had 3,800 spindles and was consuming 200,000 lbs. of cotton annually,<sup>7</sup> and by 1832, 276,000 lbs. of cotton a year were being processed on 4,000 spindles.<sup>8</sup> The Carrick's factory was one of only two cotton mills of any importance that held their own during the panic of 1837.<sup>10</sup>

Like most of the mills owned by the SUM, the Hamil Mill Lot was bought in 1840 by Roswell Colt,<sup>11</sup> and immediately transferred to the estate of his father-in-law.<sup>12</sup> It was with Colt's descendants that Robert Carrick renewed his original lease on the property in 1845.<sup>13</sup> His brother, Alexander, had died in the intervening years. In 1848, the Carrick mill burned down, and Robert Carrick retired.<sup>14</sup>

Nine years after the destruction of the Carrick works, Colt's descendants sub-leased the mill lot, and the rights to three square feet of water to Abraham H. Godwin, Ellen Prall and Edwin T. Prall, the latter two in the service as executors of the estate of Abraham Prall.<sup>15</sup> On the ruins of the Carrick mill, Godwin had John T. Spear construct a building 58 x 200, three stories high with an attic, which was called the Godwin Mill upon its completion in 1858.<sup>16</sup> Its first occupant was the firm of A. Prall and Co., which had previously carried on its cotton manufacturing operation at the Gun Mill. Godwin was a partner in the firm and served as its purchasing agent in Mobile, Alabama. Consequently, after Abraham Prall's death, William Ridgway, Sr. filled in as the concern's manager. Ridgway died in 1864, and about the same time the firm was apparently dissolved.<sup>17</sup> That same year, Carrick reaffirmed his hold on the leasehold by renewing the original lease for an additional twenty-one years.<sup>18</sup>

Until 1872, the Godwin mill was either empty, or sub-leased to small businesses. In that year, Robert Hamil and James Booth, proprietors of a silk processing firm which occupied the Passaic Mill on Ward St., bought the lease to the Godwin Mill from Godwin and the executors of Abraham Prall's estate for \$50,000,<sup>19</sup> which included rights to four square feet of water. The mill was promptly renamed the "Hamil Mill", and was used by the firm for the manufacture of ribbons and twill goods. Hamil died in 1880, and Booth in 1894. Their business was taken over by The Hamil and Booth Co., Incorporated in 1896 with the stated objectives of manufacturing silk goods, this firm had an initial capitalization of \$500,000.

The corporation bought the assets of the Hamil and Booth enterprise that year; for the property held by the estate of Hamil, the company paid in stock;<sup>21</sup> for Booth's share they were forced to pay the executors of the estate \$200,000.<sup>22</sup> By 1903, the concern had declared bankruptcy, and gone into receivership. Catholina Lambert, appointed receiver for the company by the court, sold the leasehold on the Hamil Mill to Emanuel Gerli for \$30,000 in 1903.<sup>23</sup> Gerli organized the Ashley Real Estate Company that year, and immediately sold his claim on the Hamil Mill to it.<sup>24</sup> Dissolving the firm in 1910, Gerli and his brother Joseph, and John B. Humphreys, principals of Ashley Real Estate, sold the lease to the firm of Ratsch and Dime.<sup>25</sup> Their partnership broke up within the year, and Ratsch sold his half to Jacob Dime in 1911.<sup>26</sup> One year later, he sold it to Emanuel Gerli,<sup>27</sup> who turned around and sold it to N.J. General Security Company.<sup>28</sup>

Between 1915 and 1916, N.J.G.S. bought the various parcels which made up the Hamil Mill Lot, which had been divided and its ownership scattered through generations of Colt heirs and descendants. At various time, owners included August Belmont, New York financier and American representative of the House of Rothschild; Lady Steele, a British peeress; and Barnard College. Joseph Wright bought the property outright in 1925 from the holding company, but his mortgage was foreclosed, and N.J. General Security resumed title to the Hamil Mill Lot.<sup>29</sup> In 1932, N.J. General Security sold the lot to the SUM.<sup>30</sup>